

# **EXHIBIT C**

Gissell Acosta  
1055 Sherman Avenue apt 5G  
Bronx, New York 10456

March 17, 2016

Honorable P. Kevin Castel  
United States District Judge  
Southern District of New York  
United States Courthouse  
500 Pearl Street  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge Castel:

Esmeraldo Acosta is going to be placed before you for sentencing and I understand that he will be judged because of his poor decisions. Esmeraldo is my uncle and has been in my life since the day I was born. My family is very small but very united and that is because of this man, my uncle- my father's brother. My father passed away fourteen years ago leaving behind a wife, three young girls' ages nineteen, eighteen & fourteen as well as two young boys ages ten and eight. He also left behind a niece and nephew, ages ten and six, Esmeraldo's children who lived with my family along with Esmeraldo. These people are his immediate family. Due to the death of my father, my mother was in a depression for five years which affected her and her children in different ways. My uncle, Esmeraldo, was there to guide us and keep us in the right path. I remember the talks he used to have with us when we were young about life, drugs, and crimes.

I remember as if it was yesterday, one day he took us to a cemetery and told us that we can end up there if we follow the wrong crowd or start using drugs. He also took us to a rehabilitation center a few times so we can see how people that abused drugs turned out. I remember him driving us around in his vehicle, on the streets of the South Bronx, showing us the bad crowds and reasons why we should stay away. He spoke to us about our father and how smart and educated he was and that we should follow his footsteps. He encouraged us to be involved in extracurricular activities in school and always monitored our education. He was like our father. Anytime we would do something wrong as kids, my mom would call him and he would take time from his busy day to speak to us. He would give us long lectures which actually helped us not get in trouble as kids since we didn't want to hear the long lectures. As we grew older, the conversations and lectures didn't stop. They became more intense and more adult. We feared disappointing him because he was such a good role model. A hard working man that provided for his family and an excellent father to his children and to my siblings and I which is why it's so difficult to understand what is happening and his decisions. His actions don't match his character.

Growing up in NYCHA projects in the South Bronx is terrifying when all you hear is gunshots and violent stories. My uncle, Esmeraldo shielded us in a way by teaching us that we don't have to become our environment. We were to grow up and become educated and successful children and help our mother and each other. He worked so hard to give us a good life and keep us busy and away from the bad crowds. As we grew older, his love for us just got stronger and his goals for our family kept growing. He remained involved with our life, our education and way of living. Now that we are all in our twenties and thirties, we still feel that we don't want to disappoint our uncle, our father.

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I remember all the holiday dinners and birthday parties that he arranged. Days before a holiday or one of our birthdays, he would begin planning the event. He has never missed a holiday or a birthday. Sometimes I was tired and didn't want to attend, but he would speak to me about the importance of family and being there for each other and how much it would mean to my family if I attended. He showed me the meaning of family.

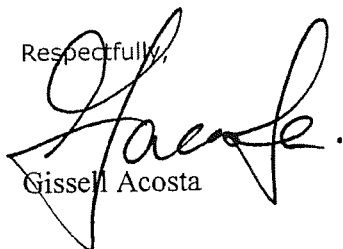
I believe my siblings and I owe our way of life to this man, my uncle, my father, Esmeraldo. I don't know where we would be if it wasn't for him. I have learned so much from him and wish that I could be as good of a parent as he was to us all. I know he has made bad decisions and I would give up everything that I have if I could somehow turn back the hands of time and somehow stop his actions which is causing so much pain to his family. I know he regrets it, I can hear it in his voice. I know without a doubt that he is a good person because how can a bad person do all the wonderful things that he has done for his family and for his friends. I know he is categorized as a criminal and I don't condone his actions because he taught me better. He taught me to understand the difference between right and wrong and I know he is wrong and he knows he is wrong. Knowing his wrongs, I forgive him. He helped my family survive many obstacles. There were seven children that were living in an environment that only a handful would surpass and the fact that all seven children managed not to become another victim, is astonishing. This was thanks to Esmeraldo. Not only has he been so good to his family, he is a good friend as well. Many times I would tell him to stop being so nice to people because I was afraid that people would take advantage of his kindness. I remember one time when I was about 20 years old, my uncle had just finished paying rent and other bills and was low on money, he had \$100.00 in his pocket that were supposed to last until his next paycheck and his friend asked him if he could have \$50 to buy food for his house because he was low on money. I thought my uncle was going to tell him that he is also low on money and couldn't help him. My uncle gave him \$50.00 and when we were alone, I asked him why? He said it was the right thing to do.

I have so much that I want to share with him and show him and talk to him about. I need his advice on so many things and I want him to see that we are still a united family and we still fear disappointing him. I want him to see his children grow up and living their lives. This situation reminds me of a quote I read years ago. "He gave his life to teach his kids how to swim that he forgot to teach himself and drowned". My uncle ended up drowning in the same situation he fought for the past 14 years to keep us shielded from.

His sentencing is approaching and I just wanted you to know that my uncle-father's actions are not a reflection of his character. He is more than his crimes. I am asking for leniency on his case because he is a good man that has made bad choices but has also made good choices in his life. My family needs their mentor to continue to guide us and to guide his future grandchildren to stay on the right path as he has with me and my siblings.

Thank you in advance for your time and for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Giselle Acosta